

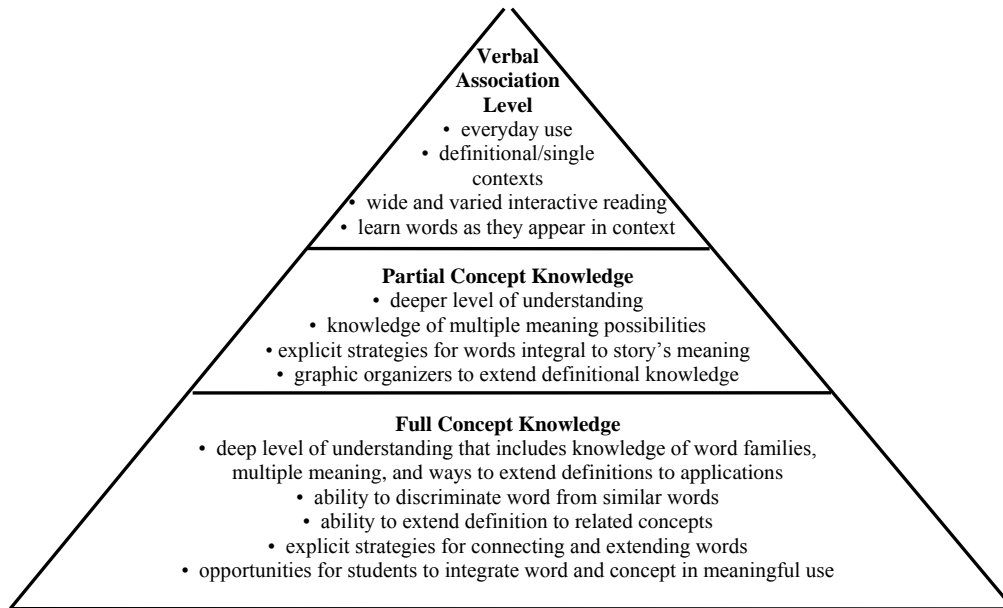
Teacher Resource: Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the words we must know to communicate effectively.

(Armbruster et al., 2001)

What does it really mean to know a word?

Multiple Levels of Understanding



Allen, J. Words, Words, Words: Teaching Vocabulary in Grades 4-12. Portland, ME: Stenhouse, 1999. Page 13.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction includes:

- Expanding word knowledge through definitions and context
- Actively involving students
- Using discussions of words and related concepts to develop word consciousness, learn word meanings, and make connections between concepts and words
- Modeling word-learning strategies by demonstrating how to:
 - determine the meanings of words based on their context,
 - look up words in a dictionary, glossary, thesaurus, etc., and
 - recognize and use information about word parts.

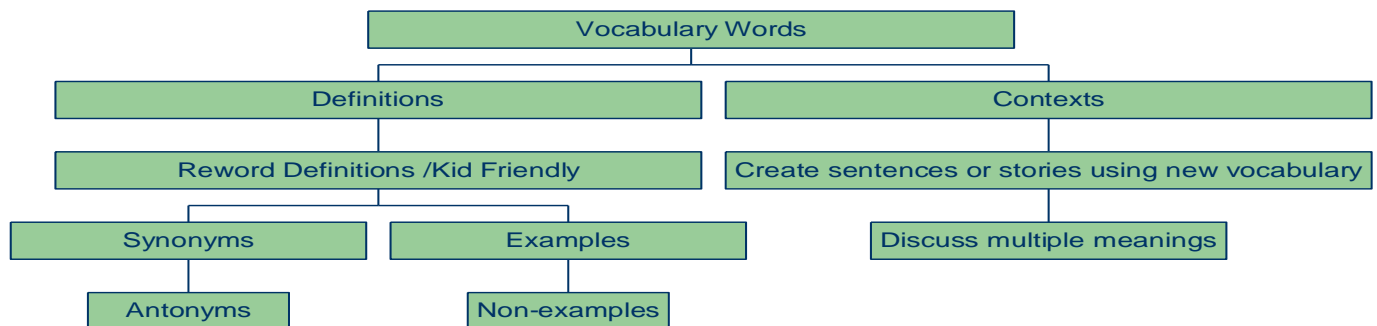
Beck and McKeown (2002) generalize vocabulary into three levels/tiers:

	Tier One	Tier Two	Tier Three
Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most basic words • rarely requiring instruction in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high frequency words for mature language users • instruction can add productively to an individual's language ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words whose frequency of use is quite low • often limited to specific domains • best learned when needed in a content area
Examples	<i>red</i> <i>mother</i> <i>run</i> <i>house</i> <i>happy</i>	<i>coincidence</i> <i>absurd</i> <i>fortunate</i> <i>industrious</i> <i>merchant</i> <u>Criteria for identification by teacher:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words that are characteristic of mature language users • Words that appear in a variety of domains • Words for which students understand the general concept 	<i>plateau</i> <i>isotope</i> <i>democracy</i>

Source: Beck, I.L., McKeown, M.G., & Kucan, L. (2002). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction. New York: Guilford

Not all words need to be taught using this approach. In order to make decisions about the specific words to teach, the teacher must preview the passage/text/theme, list words that might be challenging for that group of students, and prioritize these words by their importance.

Students need to have a deep conceptual understanding of words to successfully build a large rich vocabulary. This graphic describes how to expand word knowledge for students.



Source: University of Texas/Texas Education Agency. (2002) Texas teacher reading academies presenter guide master: Part III. Texas: Texas Education Agency and Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts.